Nº 86. SATURDAY, *September* 23, 1786.

I Happened to ſpend ſome days lately in the country, at the houſe of a gentleman diſtinguiſhed in the republic of letters, and whoſe converſation is at all times in the higheſt degree inſtructive and entertaining. On my road home from his houſe, my whole thoughts were taken up with the agreeable entertainment I had received from his company, and I was employed in treaſuring up in my mind the many uſeful obſervations that had fallen from him. When I arrived in town, the firſt perſon I met with was my old acquaintance *Sympoſius*. Sympoſius is what is called a good bottle-companion; that is, one who thinks none, talks little, and drinks a great deal. He is much in company, and good company too; becauſe he keeps his ſeat quietly, has a ſteady hand at decanting a bottle, never forgets where the toaſt ſtands, never interrupts a ſtory except by filling a bumper, can make punch, brew negus, and ſeaſon a *devil*. With this combination of qualities, Sympoſius is oftener ſeen at good dinners than any man in town; and were it not for the liquor he conſumes, would be as harmleſs as e'er a bottle-ſlider

at the table." At ſome houſe of my acquaintance he had heard of my country-excurſion, and where I had paſſed my time. "You are a "happy man," ſaid he, "in poſſeſſing an intimacy and friendſhip ſo valuable as that of "Mr. ——. I was once accidentally at his "houſe: he had the fineſt batch of wine of "any man in the country. I never drank ſuch "Old Hock in my life."

I could not help ſmiling at Sympoſius's idea of a valuable friendſhip; and yet, when I conſidered the matter a little more cloſely, I began to think that in moſt men the ſame diſpoſition might be traced, to value others according to the ſtandard of themſelves; to form their opinions and their attachments from circumſtances as partial, though not ſo ridiculous, as the friendſhip of Sympoſius for the cellar of Mr. ——

I had not long parted with Sympoſius, when I met with my old college-companion Dr. *Syntax.* He was, when I knew him firſt, a tutor at one of the univerſities, which he left on the death of a relation in India, who bequeathed him a conſiderable annuity for life. When at the univerſity, he was remarkable for his ſkill in the Latin language, and ſtill conſiders the knowledge of that tongue as the only thing which can conduct a man to eminence. I remember to have had ſome converſation with him

him about a gentleman, who, in his younger years, was one of Syntax's pupils. This gentleman had been bred to the bar; and after having figured in his profession, he became a member of the legislature, and was considered as one of the ablest speakers in the house in which he sat. "Yes," said my learned friend, "I always knew the lad would do well. When he "was under my care, he wrote Latin verses "faster than any boy I ever knew, and composed the best discourse I ever read upon *Pa-"tavinity*." I took care not to let Syntax know that the first thing his pupil did, was to endeavour to *forget* almost all he had learned from his master, and that to this he principally ascribed his success in life.

But it is not only amongst men of learning that this narrowness of opinion is to be met with. It is to be found in all professions, and in every situation. *Diticus* is a man of fortune, and indeed he has this merit, that it has been principally made by himself. To men whose wealth is of their own acquirement, it naturally appears of the highest value, as the Israelites worshipped the golden image they had made. Diticus supposes, that the possession of wealth constitutes the great happiness of life. In this, perhaps, however false the supposition, Diticus is not singular; but he carries the matter a

good deal farther, and thinks that wealth confers not only every blessing, but every talent and accomplishment. He thinks meanly of the sense, the learning, or the taste of any man who walks on foot; a little better of one who rides a horseback, but his idea of supreme excellence is confined to the person who lolls in his coach and six. When you see Diticus with a stranger, you may judge of the weight of his purse from the degree of complaisance and attention which Diticus pays to his opinions. Diticus would not for the world be thought to be intimate with a poor man; and avoids as much as possible being seen with persons suspected of poverty; and if he should be so unlucky as to encounter with any of them, he takes care to show, by his behaviour, in what repute he holds their abilities and understanding. If he has a rich man at his table, he sends him a larger slice of his mutton than to any other person, as if his stomach were proportionably capacious as his purse; if he is engaged in a party at cards, he chuses the wealthiest man of the set for his partner, as if riches could give skill in the game. I dined t'other day with Diticus, when, upon his telling me a story that appeared not a little improbable, I expressed some difficulty to give entire credit to it; Diticus, with great earnestness, assured me it was most certainly true; for he had

had heard it from a gentleman of L. 3000 a-year.

The character of *Valens* is very different from that of Diticus, but he is guided by principles equally abſurd. Valens has the good fortune to be poſſeſſed of a hale robuſt conſtitution. Valens is not only ſenſible of the advantage ariſing from this circumſtance, but prizes it ſo highly as to think it communicates every other advantage; and that the want of it is connected with every thing that is mean and unworthy. Valens never ſees a man with broad ſhoulders, brawny legs, or an open cheſt, but he looks upon him with reſpect, and wiſhes to become his friend; while he ſtarts back with horror from, and avoids, as he would do a thing contaminated, a man who has the appearance of a weak and ſickly conſtitution. In ſhort, good health with Valens is like the cruſt of loaf bread, which Peter told his brothers was the ſtaff of life, in which was contained the quinteſſence of beef, mutton, veal, veniſon, partridge, plumb-pudding, and cuſtard. As Valens is a man of ſome education, he has formed a theory, in order to juſtify his conduct and principles. If you attempt to reaſon with him, he will tell you, that health muſt be the foundation, not only of good morals, but of every thing elſe that is valuable; that without a robuſt conſtitution, no man can poſſeſs

poſſeſs firmneſs and intrepidity of mind, or give that application and attention which is requiſite for the purpoſes of life; that it is health alone which can give cheerfulneſs, and its attendants, good-will and benevolence to others; that without health a man becomes peeviſh, chagrined, moroſe, and diſcontented, diſpleaſed with himſelf, and unfriendly to all the reſt of mankind. When he has a mind to be more diffuſe, as he is a man of ſome humour, he will tell you, that John Knox could never have brought about the Reformation, had he not been a man of a ſtrong make and a firm conſtitution; that Marlborough would never have been able to ſtem the power of France, had he not been of that figure of body which gives ſtrength and vigour to the mind; that Cicero's long neck produced that feebleneſs of ſoul, which threw ſuch a cloud over his other qualities; and that, had not Alexander the Great been a man of ſmall ſtature, he would not only have conquered the world, but have been able to hand down the empire he had won undivided to his ſucceſſors.

The character of *Pallidus* forms an exact counter-part to that of Valens. Pallidus inherited from nature a feeble conſtitution; and the effeminate education which he received from his doting parents, who had no other child, did not tend to correct or to ſtrengthen it. As Pallidus's

lidus's ſtate of health is very different from that of Valens, ſo he has formed a ſyſtem directly oppoſite. Pallidus is conſtantly telling you, and he is *uneaſy* if you do not believe him, that it is only men of delicate conſtitutions who can be ſuſceptible of the delicacies of virtuous feeling; that men who are robuſt and hardy, acquire a ferociouſneſs and a hardneſs of mind which deſtroys all the finer principles of the ſoul. Pallidus is at times eloquent upon the ſubject; he will run you over a long liſt of names of men who have been confeſſedly allowed to be poſſeſſed of the fineſt genius; and concludes with aſſuring you, it was the extreme delicacy of their health that gave birth to their exquiſite ſenſibility of mind, which exerted itſelf in thoſe diſplays of imagination and of ſcience which have rendered them immortal. Pallidus is exceedingly fond of the ſociety of the ladies, and courts their company; but he was never known to be attached to a woman remarkable for the goodneſs of her conſtitution, who was able to bear fatigue, or to ſhare thoſe exerciſes which require bodily ſtrength. Pallidus has ever in his mouth that remark of Dean Swift's, "That he never knew a woman who "was good for any thing, that had a conſtant "flow of health and good ſpirits." Nay, Pallidus carries the matter ſo far, that he cannot en-

dure to ſee a female eat with an appetite; and would no more allow his ſiſter or his niece to aſſociate with a woman of a good ſtomach, than with one of a tainted reputation.

In all theſe characters, I perceived, upon a little reflection, the ſame leading propenſity to bring the happineſs, the excellence, or the defects of others, to our own ſtandard; and I am perſuaded, were we narrowly to examine thoſe around us, we ſhould find among the buſy, the idle, the ambitious, or the diſſipated, the ſame colouring of objects, according to their own prevailing taſte or humour; and that, though the examples might not found ſo ludicrouſly, the principle would ſtill be found the ſame, would ſtill, in the eye of a philoſopher, be the *Old Hock* of Sympoſius.

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